

Greece and Bulgaria and other countries as well. And so that is why the U.S. has a vital interest.

But I wanted to come to the floor today to point out the ethnic cleansing and the genocide and to say that when the United States has the ability to help prevent these kinds of atrocities we ought to do it.

Again this is an independent panel. This is not some panel that is hired by one side or another. This is an independent panel, independent forensic report, and it is what we said all along, that these are innocent civilians, unarmed civilians, men, women and children who are being ethnically cleansed who are being killed by the Serbian led forces under Slobodan Milosevic, who in my opinion is a war criminal and should be prosecuted by the International Tribunal at the Hague.

Mr. Speaker, I place the entire article into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD at this time:

[From the Washington Post, March 17, 1999]
KOSOVO KILLINGS CALLED A MASSACRE—SOME
VICTIMS SHOT WHILE ON THEIR KNEES
(By R. Jeffrey Smith)

ROME, March 16—An independent forensic report into the killings of 40 ethnic Albanians in the Kosovo village of Racak in January has found that the victims were unarmed civilians executed in an organized massacre, some of them forced to kneel before being sprayed with bullets, according to Western sources familiar with the report.

The findings by Finnish forensic experts, set to be released Wednesday in Pristina, the Kosovo capital, contradict claims by officials of the Serb-led Yugoslav government that the dead were armed ethnic Albanian separatists or civilians accidentally caught in a cross-fire between government security forces and separatist rebels. Western officials have blamed the killings on government police.

Because of the extreme sensitivity of the case, leaders of the European Union, which sponsored the probe, have asked the forensic team to withhold some of its most potentially inflammatory findings when its members appear at a news conference Wednesday, officials said.

The request, they say, was made out of concern that the results will further polarize the two sides in the Kosovo conflict and impede the Belgrade government's acceptance of a peace agreement for the Serbian province in talks underway in France.

One Western official said the German government, which holds the rotating chairmanship of the European Union, had ordered the Finnish team not to release a summary of its probe, which includes details about how some of the victims appeared to have died. Instead, at Bonn's request, the team agreed to release only the voluminous summaries of autopsies it helped conduct on bodies of the victims.

The killings on Jan. 15 at Racak, an ethnic Albanian village southwest of Pristina, outraged the world and became a turning point in the year-long conflict between security forces and the Kosovo Liberation Army, the main ethnic Albanian rebel group fighting for Kosovo's independence from Serbia, the dominant republic in the Yugoslav federation.

NATO leaders condemned the killings at the time and renewed their threat to carry out punitive airstrikes against Yugoslav military targets. Days later, both sides in the conflict agreed to take part in peace

talks in France sponsored by the United States, Russia and four west European nations.

On Monday, ethnic Albanian negotiators pledged to sign a draft peace agreement that would provide substantial autonomy to Kosovo, while Belgrade officials have continued to object not only to the language of the proposed political settlement, but also to a provision mandating deployment of 28,000 NATO-led troops in Kosovo to enforce its terms.

The forensic team's investigation, based on an examination of evidence at the site and autopsies conducted jointly with Yugoslav government pathologists, determined that 22 of the victims were slain in a gully on the outskirts of Racak, precisely where their bodies were found on the morning of Jan. 16. The gully is so narrow that these victims could only have been shot deliberately at close range, the sources said.

Although the bodies of some other victims in the village were moved into homes or a mosque before international observers arrived, the forensic experts were able to determine where all but four of the 40 victims had died. From the pattern of the bullet wounds on their bodies and other evidence—such as their civilian clothing and possessions—the team found no reason to conclude they were killed accidentally or were members of the Kosovo Liberation Army, said the sources, who asked not to be identified.

Western officials say the team found that the angle of the bullet wounds in the victims' bodies was consistent with a scenario in which some of them were forced to kneel before being sprayed with gunfire from automatic weapons. This "spray pattern" finding is among the sensitive details that officials said may be withheld at Wednesday's news conference. Wounds on the bodies of some other victims evidently suggest they were shot while running away, the sources said.

On Jan. 16, U.S. special envoy William Walker, head of an international monitoring mission in Kosovo, described the killings as a massacre by government forces, and Yugoslav officials ordered him out of the country. The order was later suspended after the West threatened punitive action.

Western sources subsequently disclosed that telephone conversations between top Yugoslav and Serbian officials about the slayings showed that the officials explicitly sought to contrive an explanation for the killings that would shift blame away from security forces.

The Yugoslav government invited the Finnish forensic team to conduct the investigation at a time when many countries were demanding an inquiry by the International War Crimes Tribunal in The Hague. Yugoslavia has refused to cooperate with the tribunal or recognize the legitimacy of its mandate over matters of Yugoslav territory, so the Finns were accepted as compromise.

Officials in Belgrade, aware of the potential impact the forensic report might have on foreign sentiment about the conduct of its army and paramilitary forces, have mounted sustained propaganda campaign to cast the forensic team's conclusions in a favorable, and, according to the sources, highly misleading light.

An article in today's editions of Politika, a Belgrade newspaper connected to the government, claimed for example that the team had established that all the victims all had fired weapons before their deaths and that the bodies of all of them had been moved. The chief public prosecutor for Serbia, Dragisa Krsmanovic, alleged similarly last week that forensic tests showed the victims all had been shot from a distance. As a result, he said, government troops could not be prosecuted for their actions in Racak.

The forensic team searched but found no evidence to support these claims. On the other hand, its findings cast doubt on the assertion of some Western officials, including Walker, that the bodies have been deliberately mutilated by government troops.

Although 45 people reportedly were slain at Racak, the Finnish team was given access to only 40 bodies. The investigators learned that at least five more bodies, including those of at least two women, were removed from the area and presumably were buried in a cemetery south of Racak, along with as many as seven others who apparently were wounded during the assault and died later.

AMERICA'S FARMERS FIGHTING FOR THEIR LIVELIHOOD

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I am here today because our American family farmers are suffering. While the general economy is strong, the U.S. agricultural economy continues to experience significant declines in agriculture commodity prices that began over a year ago. The price declines experienced by wheat and cattle producers over the last couple of years have expanded now to all of the feed grains, oil seed, cotton, pork and now the dairy sectors at record all-time lows. Farm income is expected to fall from \$53 billion in 1996 to \$43 billion next year, nearly a 20 percent decline.

Mr. Speaker, last week I met with a number of farmers just from Ohio. One left me with a letter that I would like to read tonight. It says:

DEAR MS. KAPTUR: The purpose of my Washington, D.C. trip is twofold. Not only am I here today representing Ottawa County, but as a wife and partner of an Ottawa County farmer. I am very concerned about the plight of America's farmers. I can remember as a youngster back in the late 1940s all the farmers, eight full-time farmers within just 2 miles of here who lived on our road in northwest Ohio. They had dairy cows, hogs and chickens. At the present time within that same two miles there is only one full-time farmer. Since our numbers are dwindling and the American farmer only makes up 1.8 percent of our population, the American farmer is fast becoming an endangered species.

I want to know what is going to happen to the American farmer, and does Washington and our Nation really care? With the way our grain prices are falling and our costs are increasing, how is a present-day farmer going to continue and also encourage new generations to enter the farming profession? The prices are lower now than during the 1940s.

With the combination of low prices and the loss of productive agricultural ground to urban sprawl, most farming operations will cease to exist. Where is our Nation going to obtain its food? If the United States relies in greater and greater measure on foreign countries to supply its food needs, their food checkoff day will surpass the February 9 date.

Since U.S. consumers have never gone hungry, they have no concept if they lose the American farmer, their safe food supply could diminish or be completely cut off. How long can the average American farmer afford to spend \$168,000 for just one piece of equipment?

With the statistics that I am enclosing the American farmer will not be able to stay in business. Therefore agriculture will not be one of America's major industries. We are fighting for our livelihood and need yours and Congress' help.

Does anybody care? Does anybody even know?

Regards,

DEE.

She also left me with a breakdown of their family farming operation, which I will place in the RECORD, but basically what it shows is their total production cost last year was \$375,000, including what they had to pay for running their land, the cost of producing corn, the cost of producing soybeans and wheat, however their total income was only \$317,430, leaving them with a negative income last year of \$57,570.

The question to be addressed is how today's or tomorrow's farmer is going to continue to produce food for a Nation in the world if he or she cannot purchase needed equipment and meet the costs of doing business. How many other Americans have to purchase equipment like combines which retail at \$211,000 minus dealer discounts equaling about \$168,000 less trade-ins on equipment. So that leaves them with about \$111,000 to finance for 10 years at 8.75 percent interest for an annual payment of \$17,204.

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How will they continue to make that payment when their negative income prohibits them from showing any profit?

There is an increasing concentration throughout agriculture today. This concentration is severely distorting the market signals that farmers use to know what to produce, when to produce and how to make a profit. This concentration is hurting the marketplace and free competition. These market conditions are deeply hurting our family farms and threatening the economic stability of real communities across our country.

Dee asks, what can we do? First I say Congress, this Congress and this executive branch, must recognize the faces of rural America and understand the crisis out there. We must increase market transparency on prices and we should revisit freedom to farm and provide these farmers who provide our food with the safety net against these kinds of international market manipulations.

THERE IS A CRISIS ON THE AMERICAN FARM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Dakota (Mr. POMEROY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. POMEROY. Mr. Speaker, I want to commend my colleague, the gentleman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR), for the comments she has just made regarding the crisis on the American farm. Representing the State of North Dakota in this body, a congressional district that

has more production acres for agriculture than any other district in the House of Representatives, I can only affirm all too well the truth of what she is saying.

There is a crisis on the farm. If we do not act as a Congress and act quickly, the face of farming in this country will be changed. We will move from agriculture production primarily based with family farmers to vast corporate farms, changing forever the way our food is produced and a way of life in much of our country.

The critical element that has made the low commodity prices so particularly hard on our farmers relates directly back to a change made by this Congress in the farm bill that we are presently under.

In 1948, Congress acted to establish some measure of price protection for farmers, recognizing that there is going to be great volatility in the prices commodities will bring given any number of circumstances, but more recently it has been the ebb and flow of demand in the global marketplace.

The prior policy for farm programs has been that the United States Government has got the capacity to backstop individual farmers to protect them from the worst ravages of loss when prices fall through the floor. The last farm bill changed all that. We no longer afford our farmers any price protection. We have protected the Treasury of the Federal Government but we have left the fortunes of individual families out there on the farmsteads completely exposed to the ebb and flow of market prices.

The Asia financial collapse has absolutely destroyed commodity prices in this country. Small wonder. Japan, our number one export market for small grains, down 10 percent; Korea, number 4 market, off one-third, and so it goes.

So we have much more supply relative to market and prices' fall, and this time without a safety net. Small wonder in year two of the new farm bill its critical weakness was already glaringly exposed and exposed to such a dimension that in a bipartisan way we had to quickly get some money out of the Treasury and commit it to farmers in the shape of a disaster bill passed last fall in light of the national dimensions of the crisis in agriculture we had seen.

We have more to do this Congress. Do not think for one second that that disaster bill passed in October forestalls a total catastrophe in farm country without further action.

The first thing we must do is pass the supplemental. The White House has advanced an appropriations request that will afford absolutely critically needed loan money and guaranteed loan money available so that a number of farmers can get in the fields this spring that otherwise will not have operating capital to do so and that for others still they will be able to restructure their financial situation in such a way

that they will be able to cashflow, whereas otherwise they would not be able to cashflow.

Let me say something about cashflow, however. In my neck of the woods, given the commodities we produce, primarily small grains, one can get in today's market prices enough at the elevator to cover the costs that have been invested in that product. Therefore, lenders this spring are engaging in what is called equity lending; equity lending.

It does not sound all that bad but let me say what it means. It means that farmers are reducing their net worth. They are having to capitalize their assets because they cannot even make enough on the sale of their crop for what it takes to grow the crop.

We need to come back and visit this whole safety net for farming issue. We need to make some changes in the farm bill. It has fallen short and we now see where. Farmers need price protection. We need to make certain that there is a measure of price protection restored. Otherwise, we are going to be in this situation spring and fall every single year. Mark my words on this. We are going to have emergency supplemental bills in the spring and we are going to have disaster bills at harvest time trying to prop up America's farmers.

Let us not leave them hanging on the next action of Congress acting in such an ad hoc way every spring and every fall. Let us restore a safety net for America's farmers. Anything else will be catastrophic for the family farmers of this country.

THE RUMSFELD COMMISSION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. SCHAFFER) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. SCHAFFER. Mr. Speaker, this special order hour by the Republican majority is one occasion upon which we will take the opportunity to discuss the issue of national missile defense, particularly as it relates to legislation that is expected to pass on this House floor tomorrow, certainly to be debated, and we will kick off that event with an unprecedented joint bipartisan meeting on the House floor, at which we will receive a briefing and a report from the commission known as the Rumsfeld Commission.

The Rumsfeld Commission is one which was commissioned by this Congress to look into the issue of national ballistic missile defense, to ascertain the complexity of the threat that looms over the United States of America from a potential intercontinental ballistic nuclear missile attack.

Most Americans are unaware that the United States possesses no capability or capacity to stop a single incoming intercontinental ballistic missile. We cannot stop it. If any of the rogue nations that we are concerned